

REPORT

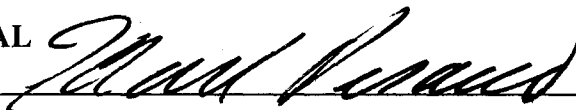
DATE: January 3, 2007

TO: Executive Committee
Transportation and Communications Committee
Regional Council

FROM: Don Rhodes, Manager Legislative Affairs, (213) 236-1840, rhodes@scag.ca.gov

SUBJECT: Letter to Congressman Costa to amend High Speed Rail Legislation

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S APPROVAL



RECOMMENDED ACTION:

Authorize transmittal of the letter

BACKGROUND:

Congressman Jim Costa (D-20) has introduced two bills to raise the national awareness for a system of high speed rail by introducing H.R. 4122, the American Investment in Safe, Reliable High –Speed Rail Act, and H.R. 4123, the High-Speed Rail Authority Development and Formation Act. His staff says that the Congressman hopes that if the bills do not move that the concepts be included in the next transportation reauthorization measure currently scheduled for 2009.

The Maglev Task Force, at it meeting on Thursday December 13, 2007, instructed staff to prepare a letter for the President's signature requesting Congressman Costa to amend his legislation to include a high speed regional transportation system in the SCAG region.

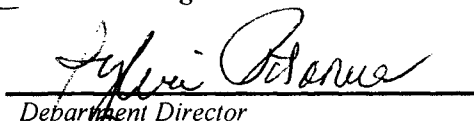
FISCAL IMPACT:

Budgeted resources are available in SCGS 08-810 to process the letter of support.

Reviewed by:


Division Manager

Reviewed by:


Department Director

Reviewed by:


Chief Financial Officer

January 3, 2007

The Honorable Jim Costa
1313 Longworth HOB
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Mr. Costa:

The Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG), the Metropolitan Planning Organization encompassing six counties (Los Angeles, Orange, San Bernardino, Riverside, Ventura and Imperial) and the cities, subregions and transportation commissions in those counties in Southern California wishes to commend your efforts to raise the national awareness for a system of high speed rail by introducing H.R. 4122, the American Investment in Safe, Reliable High – Speed Rail Act, and H.R. 4123, the High-Speed Rail Authority Development and Formation Act. We are writing to request that you amend your legislation to include a high speed regional transportation system in the SCAG region.

As you may know, the California Corridor referenced in H.R. 4122 includes a 30-mile segment between L.A. Union Station and Anaheim using the Metrolink right of way. This segment currently is contained in SCAG's draft Regional Transportation Plan (RTP). We believe it would be very beneficial to the California system contemplated in your legislation if it is integrated with the high speed regional transport system planned for the SCAG region.

SCAG has advanced a vision of regional transport based on high performance, high-speed, and environmentally sensitive alternative(s). A High-Speed Regional Transport (HSRT) system has the potential for relieving both airport and freeway congestion in urbanized areas by providing an alternative to the automobile as well as making less congested airports more accessible to air travelers, and providing alternative capacity for freight movement in the region.

The HSRT system would provide over 270 miles connecting the region's ports, airports, and urban activity centers. The system can be constructed in multiple stages that can each be financially viable using private sector resources. The financial performance will be enhanced as the system is extended throughout the region and the volume of users increases.

We would be pleased to discuss our proposed HSRT system with you at your earliest convenience. Again, please consider amending your legislation to provide for a high speed regional transportation system in the SCAG region. For purpose of staff contact please call Don Rhodes, Manager of Legislative Affairs, (213) 236-1840.

Sincerely,

Gary Ovitt,
President, Southern California Association of Governments
Supervisor San Bernardino County